

INTERNATIONAL

Buying in the ‘BoBo’ streets of Paris

Bohemian locations such as Montmartre and Pigalle are hip pockets for property hunters, says Liz Rowlinson



Since the mid-19th century, artists and rebels have gravitated towards the hilltop village of Montmartre on Paris's Right Bank. After becoming part of the city in 1860, it became a lively hub of bars, cafés and cabarets that stoked non-conformist and creative ideals.

Vincent van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Pierre-Auguste Renoir are among the many artists that lived or worked on “La Butte” (the hill) among the secret gardens and pretty cobbled streets that wind their way up to the summit, where the Sacré-Coeur Basilica with its distinctive white travertine dome was built by 1914.

A tourist magnet alive with colourful street artists, the 18th arrondissement is today, along with the next-door 9th, an increasingly fashionable district for home hunters in Paris looking for something a little more “BoBo” – bourgeois bohemian – than the traditional favourites of the 3rd/4th, nearer the river, or the 6th/7th on the Left Bank.

“Buyers seeking a village feel are attracted to the 18th for its garden spaces, food markets, but also the new organic,

vegan and artisan shops and restaurants,” says Alison Ashby, director of Junot Immobilier. “Many of the artist studios are being bought by actors and movie producers as residences, but classic *hôtel particuliers* (town houses) are also sought after, as are grand villas with great views across the city, especially from La Butte.”

Along with the village of Montmartre, the quartier includes the working-class community of Abbesses, which is centred around Rue des Abbesses with its increasingly fashionable boutiques, patisserie windows full of mouth-watering fruit tarts, the mythical Moulin Rouge cabaret club, and the vibrant African communities in Goutte d’Or and Barbès.

The average selling price for Junot Immobilier properties there is €1,052 (£944) per sq ft, compared with €1,245 in the 1st to 4th arrondissements, and €1,429 across the 5th, 6th and 7th.

At the higher end of the scale, the agent has a four-bedroom penthouse apartment on the elegant Avenue

RED SAIL DISTRICT
A flat near the Moulin Rouge that has just sold for €1.16m with VINGT



PARISIAN PLEASURES
Sacré-Coeur Basilica rises above Montmartre in the north of the city, above left; below, an apartment on Avenue Junot, €7.8m with Knight Frank



Junot (the status address of the district), with views of the Eiffel Tower from one side and the Sacré-Coeur from the other, priced at €7.8million. At the other end of the scale, you can get a bijou 323 sq ft one-bedroom flat in a Haussmannian building just steps from Montmartre with change from €350,000.

In the Abbesses district, which is slightly cheaper than Montmartre, at the end of the popular street market in Rue Lepic, there is the historic Cafédés 2 Moulins that featured in the 2001 film *Amélie*. Tucked away in a peaceful little gated garden square full of trees

nearby, there's a two-bedroom fifth-floor apartment for sale for €730,000, or a three-bedroom light-filled atelier for €1.8million, both through Knight Frank.

When London-based Stefanie Cunha and her French husband, Xavier, were seeking a weekend home in Paris, they chose a 1,400 sq ft artist's loft on Rue Caulaincourt, which skirts Montmartre. It has open-plan living across two levels and vast panelled windows. “We wanted something unique, not just a lot of rooms off a hallway,” says Stefanie, 36, who works in financial services. She was initially looking in

Saint-Germain-des-Prés in the 6th, “but the 18th is full of interesting spaces such as artists' studios,” she says. “We loved the youthful and experimental feel of the place, with its eclectic mix of one-off shops, and amazing bakeries run by talented young pastry chefs just starting out.”

“Our home is only a €7 taxi ride away from the Eurostar terminal at Gare du Nord. I love the way Paris still offers a less structured way of living, a quirkiness, that London doesn't, and we decided to move here full-time two years ago.”

The fact that property prices went

HOME COMFORTS
Stefanie Cunha and her husband Xavier in Paris, and their loft, below



up by 8.6 per cent over the past year in the 18th, according to Knight Frank, is also making it attractive to investors. In the 9th, the district to the south of the 18th, prices rose by 11.7 per cent.

In the shadow of the fading red-light district, the 9th's South Pigalle, or SoPi as it has been monickered, has become one of the super-chic areas of Paris, with its mix of decadent live music venues and cocktail bars. Designer Jean Paul Gaultier's *Fashion Freak Show* is running nightly at Pigalle's famous Les Folies-Bergère cabaret club until December.

But the 9th's other cultural offerings, the Belle-Époque department stores of Galeries Lafayette, good schools and handsome neo-classical architecture – the part of it developed in the Twenties is called Nouvelles Athènes – are also a pull for

BoBo French families arriving in this area, says Ashby. “We are now seeing prices being achieved of €11,000 to €13,000 per sq m that is completely new for SoPi.” It is perhaps not surprising that the uber-stylish new Blanche gym, dubbed “the sexiest sports club in Paris”, already has 2,500 members.

The rebirth of the 9th has been helped by the transformation of Rue des Martyrs into a foodie hotspot. It is also the subject of a book, *The Only Street in*

In the shadow of the red-light district is super-chic SoPi

are many now in the resurgent Paris market – she tips the 1st as offering scope for further growth for investors. “This area of Haussmann-era boulevards, the Louvre and the Tuileries is undergoing a lot of development, especially round the Rue de Rivoli, so I see it getting better.”

In a beautiful 19th-century building there's a large one-bedroom property for sale for €1.3million through agency Home Hunts. It may be the perfect pied-à-terre for those in town right now for Paris Fashion Week, as it is within a short sashay of the designer boutiques of the chic Rue Saint Honoré and Place Vendôme.

FOR SALE

Buy in the hip 18th arrondissement

BLANCHE

With soaring ceilings, intricate mouldings and big windows, this classic three-bedroom third-floor apartment is near Rue Lepic.

Guide Price: €1.45 million
Agent: Junot (0033 1 42 52 40 00; junot.fr)



AVENUE JUNOT

With a huge roof terrace, this four-bedroom penthouse has views from the Eiffel Tower to the Sacré-Coeur.

Guide Price: €7.8 million
Agent: Knight Frank (020 7861 1727; knightfrank.com)



RUE DES ABBESSES

This bright and airy south-facing flat looks over a courtyard and the roofs of Paris, and has three bedrooms.

Guide Price: €2.2 million
Agent: Knight Frank (020 7861 1727; knightfrank.com)



LIFE IS A CABARET
Four-bedroom apartment has views of the Moulin Rouge, below and left, €2.17m with Knight Frank



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